

Our Two Policies On Two Chinas

By Marquis Childs

AS THE pressure of the Communists in Laos increases a familiar shadow once again darkens the eastern horizon. Because United States policy ignores Red China does not mean that it will conveniently fold up, nor does it mean that the increasing thrust of Chinese imperialism will not be felt throughout all of Asia.

If there are two Chinas—Formosa and Chiang Kai-shek and the Communist mainland—there are also two China policies within the Government here. Powerful forces in the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency have not abandoned the view that American interests in the Far East can never be safeguarded short of a direct confrontation with Red China.

The official policy is to build up Chiang on Formosa—some \$3 billion in American military and economic aid have gone into the island which is about one-third the size of Cuba with nearly twice the population—as a theoretical alternative to the Red dictatorship. Chiang continues to promise a return to the mainland but he has signed an agreement that he will not undertake an invasion without the consent of the United States. Official policy set by the President is opposed to any invasion attempt in the conviction that such an attempt would, under present circumstances, be suicidal.

WHAT POINTS this up are recurring rumors that Chiang, now 75 years old, means nevertheless to make the try. He has had strong support in the past from the Pentagon-CIA faction that believes in a direct conflict with China. And despite the fact that a high civilian official of the Pentagon went to Formosa specifically to tell the Gimo, short for Generalissimo, that his invasion plans could not be realized without massive United States support which would not be forthcoming, a troubling doubt remains.

The question, in short, is: Who's in charge here? The degree to which CIA has in recent years shaped policy in Asia by the acts of CIA operatives with almost-unlimited, unvouchered funds and independent, on-the-scene authority in an open secret at top Government levels. From time to time in four—some would say six—Asian capitals the CIA chief has exerted the real authority against the American ambassador duly accredited to the country.

The degree of direction from the CIA on Formosa cannot be measured. For nearly three years, beginning in 1960, the American Ambassador, Everett F. Wright, made himself an advocate of Chiang. The Kennedy Administration replaced him with Alan Kirk, a well-known admiral who was ambassador to Moscow from 1951 to 1953. Going with instructions to keep Chiang

leashed, Kirk became ill after six months and came home in January and resigned. Since then the embassy has been headed by a charge d'affaires.

The vacant post was tentatively offered to Admiral George W. Anderson, retiring chief of naval operations. To some this seemed a curious choice in view of the lack of political understanding Anderson has demonstrated together with his more or less open opposition to certain Kennedy policies. He has agreed to go as ambassador to Portugal.

ANOTHER admiral, Jerauld Wright, has taken the Formosa post. In his last active assignment, as commander of NATO naval forces and the Atlantic Fleet, Wright showed great charm and diplomatic talent. On his retirement he went to the CIA as one of the 12 members of the Board of National Estimate, which does the final appraisal before final recommendations are passed upon. Little imagination is required to see the consequences of an attempt by Chiang to land perhaps a division on the China coast some time this summer when weather conditions are most favorable. This would be in the belief that the invasion would set flame to widespread discontent with the Communist dictatorship.

It was on that same assumption the fiasco of the Bay of Pigs invasion was unhappily based.

With disaster looming, Chiang would send up a cry for American help. And it is here that a recurring nightmare haunts sober officials. To refuse such help would be to invite the charge for the China lobby and the Republican opposition that the Democrats are the only party that lost China twice.

But to go to Chiang's rescue would touch off a chain reaction so far-reaching no one would venture to predict its end. At the very least it would heal the breach between Russia and China and put a period to all hope of a permanent split in the Communist bloc. At the worst it would mean nuclear war. That is a measure of what is at stake in the old recurring dilemma of China.

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